

After the hearing, the judge will make a decision based on all the information in your case, including any new information you give. We will send you a letter and a copy of the judge's decision.

Appeals Council

If you disagree with the hearing decision, you may ask for a review by Social Security's Appeals Council. We will be glad to help you ask for this review.

The Appeals Council looks at all requests for review, but it may deny a request if it believes the hearing decision was correct. If the Appeals Council decides to review your case, it will either decide your case itself or return it to an administrative law judge for further review.

If the Appeals Council denies your request for review, we will send you a letter explaining the denial. If the Appeals Council reviews your case and makes a decision itself, we will send you a copy of the decision. If the Appeals Council returns your case to an administrative law judge, we will send you a letter and a copy of the order.

Federal Court

If you disagree with the Appeals Council's decision or if the Appeals Council decides not to review your case, you may file a lawsuit in a federal district court. The letter we send you about the Appeals Council's action also will tell you how to ask a court to look at your case.

Will my benefits continue?

In some cases, you may ask us to continue paying your benefits while we make a decision on your appeal. You can ask for your benefits to continue when:

- You are appealing our decision that you can no longer get Social Security disability benefits because your medical condition is not disabling; or
- You are appealing our decision that you are no longer eligible for SSI payments or that your SSI payment should be reduced or suspended.

If you want your benefits to continue, you must tell us within 10 days of the date you receive our letter. If your appeal is turned down, you may have to pay back any money you were not eligible to receive.

Can someone help me?

Yes. Many people handle their own Social Security appeals with free help from Social Security. But you can choose a lawyer, a friend, or someone else to help you. Someone you appoint to help you is called your "representative." We will work with your representative just as we would work with you. Your representative can act for you in most Social Security matters and will receive a copy of any decisions we make about your application.

Your representative cannot charge or collect a fee from you without first getting written approval from Social Security. If you want more information about having a representative, ask for *Your Right To Representation* (Publication No. 05-10075) or you can find it on our website.

Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to contact us anytime, anywhere is to visit www.socialsecurity.gov. There, you can: apply for benefits; open a *my* Social Security account, which you can use to review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, and get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S; obtain valuable information; find publications; get answers to frequently asked questions; and much more.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

If you need to speak to a person, we can answer your calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a higher than usual rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.



Securing today
and tomorrow

29C

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